

**199—9.1(479,479B) General information.**

**9.1(1) Authority and purpose.** The rules in this chapter are adopted by the Iowa utilities commission pursuant to the authority granted to the commission in Iowa Code sections 479.29 and 479B.20 to establish standards for the restoration of agricultural lands during and after pipeline construction. These rules constitute the minimum standards for restoration of agricultural lands disturbed by pipeline construction. These rules do not apply to land located within city boundaries, unless the land is used for agricultural purposes, or to interstate natural gas pipelines.

When a project-specific land restoration plan is required pursuant to Iowa Code section 479.29(9) or 479B.20(9), following notice and comment, the commission may impose additional or more stringent standards as necessary to address issues specific to the nature and location of the particular pipeline project. Where a project-specific land restoration plan is not required pursuant to Iowa Code section 479.29(9) or 479B.20(9), the rules in this chapter shall constitute the minimum land restoration standards for any pipeline construction.

**9.1(2) Definitions.** The following words and terms, when used in these rules, shall have the meanings indicated below:

*“Affected person”* means any person with a legal right or interest in the property, including, but not limited to, a landowner, a contract purchaser of record, a person possessing the property under a lease, a record lienholder, and a record encumbrancer of the property.

*“Agricultural land”* means any land devoted to agricultural use, including, but not limited to, land used for crop production, cleared land capable of being cultivated, hay land, pasture land, managed woodlands and woodlands of commercial value, truck gardens, farmsteads, commercial agricultural-related facilities, feedlots, rangeland, livestock confinement systems, land on which farm buildings are located, and land used to implement management practices and structures for the improvement or conservation of soil, water, air, and related plant and animal resources.

*“Commission”* means the utilities commission within the utilities division of the department of commerce.

*“County inspector”* means a professional engineer who is licensed under Iowa Code chapter 542B, who is familiar with agricultural and environmental inspection requirements, and who is designated by the county board of supervisors to be responsible for completing an on-site inspection for compliance with this chapter and Iowa Code chapters 479 and 479B.

*“Drainage structures”* or *“underground improvements”* means any permanent structure used for draining agricultural lands, including tile systems and buried terrace outlets.

*“Hazardous liquid”* means crude oil, refined petroleum products, liquefied petroleum gases, anhydrous ammonia, liquid fertilizers, liquefied carbon dioxide, alcohols, and coal slurries.

*“Person”* means individual, corporation, limited liability company, government or governmental subdivision or agency, business trust, estate, trust, partnership or association, or any other legal entity as defined in Iowa Code section 4.1(20).

*“Pipeline”* means any pipe, pipes, or pipelines used for the transportation or transmission of any solid, liquid, or gaseous substance, except water, or hazardous liquid, within or through Iowa.

*“Pipeline company”* means any person engaged in or organized for the purpose of owning, operating, or controlling pipelines.

*“Pipeline construction”* means activity associated with installation, relocation, replacement, removal, or operation or maintenance of a pipeline that disturbs agricultural land, but shall not include work performed during an emergency, tree clearing, or topsoil surveying completed on land under easement with written approval from the landowner. Emergency means a condition involving clear and immediate danger to life, health, or essential services, or a risk of a potentially significant loss of property. When the emergency condition ends, pipeline construction will be in accordance with these rules.

*“Proper notice to the county inspector”* means that the pipeline company and its contractors shall keep the county inspector continually informed of the work schedule and any changes to the schedule, and shall provide at least 24 hours’ written notice before commencing or continuing any construction activity which requires inspection by the county inspector, including, but not limited to, right-of-way staking, clearing, boring, topsoil removal and stockpiling, trenching, tile marking, tile screening, tile repairs, backfilling,

decompaction, cleanup, restoration, or testing at any project location. The pipeline company may request that the county inspector designate a person to receive such notices. If proper notice is given, construction shall not be delayed due to a county inspector's failure to be present on site.

*"Soil conservation practices"* means any land conservation practice recognized by federal or state soil conservation agencies, including, but not limited to, grasslands and grassed waterways, hay land planting, pasture, and tree plantings.

*"Soil conservation structures"* means any permanent structure recognized by federal or state soil conservation agencies, including, but not limited to, toe walls, drop inlets, grade control works, terraces, levees, and farm ponds.

*"Surface drains"* means any surface drainage system, such as shallow surface field drains, grassed waterways, open ditches, or any other conveyance of surface water.

*"Till"* means to loosen the soil in preparation for planting or seeding by plowing, chiseling, discing, or similar means. For the purposes of this chapter, agricultural land planted using no-till planting practices is also considered tilled.

*"Topsoil"* means the uppermost layer of the soil with the darkest color or the highest content of organic matter, generally referred to as the "A" horizon. In areas where the "A" horizon is determined by a certified professional soil scientist to be less than 12 inches, the topsoil depth shall include both the "A" and the "Bw" horizons as determined by the March 2017 United States Department of Agriculture Soil Survey Manual. Topsoil depth is to be determined under the supervision of a certified professional soil scientist.

*"Underground storage"* means storage of either natural gas or hazardous liquid in a subsurface stratum or formation of the earth.

*"Wet conditions"* means adverse soil conditions due to rain events, antecedent moisture, or ponded water, where the passage of construction equipment may cause rutting that mixes topsoil and subsoil, may prevent the effective removal or replacement of topsoil and subsoil, may prevent proper decompaction, or may damage underground tile lines.

[ARC 5685C, IAB 6/16/21, effective 7/21/21; Editorial change: IAC Supplement 7/24/24]